



A
SECOND APPEAL

TO

THE RIGHT REVEREND

THE LORD BISHOP OF OXFORD,

ON THE

DIVINITY OF THE TRACT WRITERS,

MORE PARTICULARLY WITH

REFERENCE TO THEIR VIEWS OF SUBSCRIPTION

TO THE

THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES,

AS MAINTAINED

BY MR. KEBLE,

IN HIS

CASE OF CATHOLIC SUBSCRIPTION CONSIDERED.

BY THE

REV. J. JORDAN, B.A.

VICAR OF ENSTONE, OXON.

OXFORD,

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,
AND SOLD BY J. L. WHEELER, HIGH STREET.

1841.

AN APPEAL,

&c.

MY LORD,

That which I predicted so recently as the 10th of last April, respecting the improbability of the Tract writers being silenced by the admonition of your Lordship, which many had vainly imagined would be the case, has already, I grieve to say, and though already, yet not sooner than I had anticipated, come to pass. It is true that Tract 90 has been nominally suppressed; it is true that Mr. Newman has, by no published writings of his, since taken part in the discussion. But have none of the other editors and writers of the Tracts taken up the subject, and defended not only their views in general, but this very Tract in particular? Mr. Ward of Balliol College has published no less than two pamphlets, bearing on their title pages, with an honesty that cannot be too highly commended, however much the purpose may be deplored, "in support of No. 90 of the Tracts for the Times." In the latter of these he defends himself from a strong remonstrance he had received respecting the former, "on the ground of its running counter to the judgment" of your Lordship, and at the same time explains away the commonly understood force of that judgment by contending that "nothing surely can be more *pointedly* irrespective of the *doctrine* of the Tract" than it is. The Tract may be "objectionable," he conceives, upon various grounds, as "the time of its appearance," or "the manner of its advocacy," but its *doctrine* is not presumed to be the cause of its "objectionableness," and accordingly he has once and again defended the doctrine which in his view has not been objected to. Mr. Keble, as a Professor of the University of Oxford, has, with equal ingenuity, got rid of the judgment of the Board of Heads of Houses. With him their judgment is no University

judgment at all, much less is it an University censure. It is nothing more than the expressed "opinion of the majority of individuals who happened to be present upon the occasion?" whether few or many, or bearing what proportion to all the Heads of the University, is of course not known, nor of consequence; but as in this view of their judgment it is merely that of a few individuals, whose opinions are respectable by reason of their station, but nothing more, so in fact no judgment at all has been passed, either University or Episcopal, in the matter, and this he esteems a most "providential circumstance."

Thus then, my Lord, we still have the prime movers of the Tract Divinity active in propagating their views, and not the least silenced or abashed by the opinions and judgments that have been given against them. The fact is no other than what was reasonably to be expected, for it was vain to suppose that a system that had shewn such steady growth and progress, and almost an early maturity, could at once, and by a few words, be either suppressed or disproved. It becomes necessary, therefore, for those who love, and are jealous of the truth, especially the sincere milk of the Word of God, to come forward once again in defence of it, and appeal to them that are in authority to uphold and maintain it.

The subject, then, connected with the Divinity of the Tract writers, which I would desire especially to bring before your Lordship in this Second Appeal, is that of subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles, which they are endeavouring by subtlety and evasion, as shall presently be made apparent, to reconcile with their so called Catholic views. I intend to treat the subject under two heads, first, *their views of Catholic subscription*; secondly, *the right views of subscription*; and shall proceed at once without further introduction, to discuss these two at large.

I. Their views of Catholic subscription, as they call it, have been nowhere more fully considered and developed, than in a Letter of Mr. Keble to Mr. Justice Coleridge, entitled, "The Case of Catholic Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles Considered." The manner of this letter's appearance, however, is so extraordinary, and so unfair, that some preliminary observations respecting it will be necessary to explain the circumstances of its publication, and to justify this discussion and exposure of its fallacies. It has been printed and circulated very partially amongst those with whom it was thought likely to take, and

those whom the Tract party are most desirous to persuade or coerce into their own views. With this latter object it was sent to all the Bishops, and to all the Heads of Houses in the University of Oxford. It acknowledges these to be the judges of the matter of which it treats, both as respects the Church at large and the University in particular, and at the same time attempts, by an *ex parte* statement, not made in the face of day, not made, as other advocates of the cause make theirs, in that open court where the trial is going on, in the presence of the Christian Church, but privately sent to those whom it acknowledges to be judges in the controversy, for the purpose of unfairly biasing them in favour of the author's own views and cause. Certainly nothing so unjustifiable as this was ever before done in a public controversy. It is contrary to every maxim of justice and propriety. Our British Courts of Law are renowned for the fairness and publicity of their practice, so that they are deservedly the glory of our own as they are the admiration and jealousy of other nations. A rule of our courts it is, that no one party in a cause may produce a document or testimony which the opposite party shall not have the full use and discussion of; nor even that any part of a document shall be brought forward to prejudice a case, without the whole being laid openly before the court, for the adverse party to make what use they can of it in defence of their cause. Such a rule as this bears honesty upon the face of it, and gives to our practice and administration of justice the confidence it so highly deserves. What then shall be thought of the case of a party which is afraid to see the light, but steals secretly to the privacy of the judges to whom it appeals, and attempts to prejudice and alarm their minds in favour of its own cause? Such is the purpose and design of Mr. Keble's partially circulated Letter, as we shall have too much reason to see presently.

Having, however, been thus privately circulated, by what right it may be asked is a publication so far private, dragged before the public, and openly discussed and exposed? Fortunately, my Lord, I am able to answer this most satisfactorily. I had seen the pamphlet some time, for it was to be seen privately, though its circulation was so far restricted that it was not to be purchased, but as it had then not been made public, either by Mr. Keble or any of his party, I did not feel myself

justified in replying to or noticing it, and abstained from doing so. But thanks to Mr. Ward, he has relieved me from any such difficulty. He has had no scruples of this kind. He has referred to it, and quoted it in his second pamphlet, in support of his own views, and has not only twice cited its authority, but has given a considerable extract from it. Its privacy then is at an end. It is no longer the partially circulated letter that it was. It is public property. It is appealed to by the Tract writers themselves. It must be construed not by one particular passage, but through the whole of it. It is before the court, and we have a right now to make what use of it we please.

Before entering upon the discussion of the chief topic of Mr. Keble's letter, I would beg leave to make a few passing observations on those which he has given, as introductory to his main subject. In his very first paragraph he expresses his apprehension lest people should be "excited, and think themselves called upon to make up their minds in a hurry;" and even adds, that "persons seem unusually inclined to act and speak hastily on the subject." I rejoice that it is so. I rejoice that we "are hot," and that at least we are not chargeable with being neither "cold nor hot." The Apostle encourages us "to be zealously affected always in a good cause," and this the cause of Holy Scriptural truth is one so good, so excellent, so vital, that he who through it draws the breath of his spiritual life cannot feel it affected, either for good or for evil, without having all his energies excited to rejoice in the one, or to resist the other. But are we, who have long since tested and examined our Articles by what are now called Catholic, though they might more properly be termed Papistical principles, and have altogether rejected such an interpretation of them, maintaining, according to the terms of our subscription, that they are "agreeable to the word of God;"—are we to be accused at this day of being "in a hurry" to condemn the contrary, because our acquaintance with Scriptural truth makes us alive to every attack upon it, and quickens our every energy to resist it. It is little short of a libellous accusation upon the clergy, at least, to say that they are over sensitive of the Scriptural Articles they enjoy, and that they are over hasty to maintain truths which they have long since pledged themselves to by subscription. Of what value is the banner they are ranged under if in the hour of

danger, however sudden and unexpected, they are not prepared to rally round it, and to rescue it from the hands of their opponents.

But indeed it would seem, from the admission of Mr. Keble, that it is himself and those who think with him, that have been startled by the Articles, and not those who are opposed to him. It is those who are "imbued with Catholic principles" who have been "in some points staggered by the tone and wording of the Articles." They find so much opposed to them there. "The Sufficiency of Holy Scripture for Salvation," bids so much defiance to their views of tradition; the doctrine that "a man is justified by faith only" is so contradictory to that of their fondly-cherished patristic justification; the definition of the visible Church is so comprehensive of all men in Christian charity; "the Article about Sacraments has a sound so much at variance with the old Church writers," and that about councils requires so much explanation;—these and similar points in our Articles have so "staggered those that are imbued with Catholic principles," that they in truth are over hasty to evade the Articles, and their judgment of these errors, by overlaying them with interpretations which utterly obscure their simplicity and truth.

Mr. Keble has made another most important admission. In the former appeal that I made to your Lordship I endeavoured to shew that there was nothing new in Tract No. 90, that all the points of it had been previously brought forward in preceding publications; that those had been assumed to have met with approbation because they had not been condemned, and that the only real relation subsisting between Tract 90 and the rest of the publications, was that which the sum of an arithmetical series bears to the several terms composing it, and that it was but one expression as it were for all that had gone before. However much I may have failed to make clear, and to substantiate this point, Mr. Keble has placed it beyond a doubt, both by admitting it to be so, and assigning it as a reason for the surprise of himself and his friends, that so much objection should be made against this Tract. It did not occur to me, he says, at page 11, that the publication of this Tract "was more likely to cause disgust, and excite animadversion and controversy, than former publications, expressing the same views. I found hardly any thing in it, which had not been before avowed, and explained, and vindicated. Perhaps I did not sufficiently

consider the difference involved in bringing the whole together, in a comparatively small compass, and in shewing how it bore directly on an important practical question." Probably had he done so, a previous Tract on Reservation in Teaching would have supplied him with judicious arguments for adopting some less open method of propagating error.

Mr. Keble then proceeds to "the particular topic, on which he is anxious to address his brethren . . . There appears to him to be some chance of an authoritative prohibition of his views, . . . and it becomes a serious question, what ought to be the line of conduct adopted in such case by persons holding those views, and concerned in any way with subscription to the Articles." Mr. Keble's object is twofold, either to get rid of any, and every, condemnation that may fall upon his views, or to reconcile his views and subscription together. He writes apparently with much order and regularity, but at the same time in so involved a manner, that it is difficult to follow him through his windings. Thus he argues out, apparently with great precision, first the case of subscription in the University, and secondly in the Church. But the *principles* upon which he goes in this discussion it is most difficult to trace. His object there is not the least doubt of. He consoles himself with the "providential circumstance" that no "*authoritative* censure has yet been passed." The mild admonition of your Lordship, and the faithful judgment of the Board of Heads of Houses, are alike unheeded. These are not with him "*authoritative* censures." And not only is he bent upon getting rid of all previous judgments, but he would either keep off, or explain away, any future one.

First, he takes the case of University subscription, and supposing, for the sake of argument, "that not the Heads of Houses, but the Academical Body in Convocation assembled, had determined that the suggested interpretations evade rather than explain the Articles," he admits that in persons holding such views it would be "but plain conscientiousness, to withdraw from an engagement which they could not religiously fulfil," pp. 13. & 16. But since this censure has not yet been passed, his object is to convert the suspected decree of it into a scarecrow, and to shew that it would be such a stumbling block, as he would represent it, to those engaged in tuition, that it would be like spreading a snare for consciences; and

thus he endeavours to alarm those who would have to vote upon the question, lest they cast this stumbling stone in their own and others' way.

Having thus raised one cloud of doubt and difficulty, and excited an alarm lest a vote of the House of Convocation should be given against Catholic views, he endeavours to raise another by utterly misrepresenting and confounding the whole notion of subscription. From p. 17 to p. 25, a discussion is carried on as to whose sense of the Articles we are to take, whether that of the compilers or imposers; or what sense they ought to be taken in, whether the Catholic sense or not; and certainly no special pleading was ever more miserably exercised than is the author's ingenuity here, to keep entirely out of view the simple truth, that the Articles are to be understood by themselves alone. What matters it to us that Waterland conceived they were to be taken in "the sense of the compilers," and then modified his view to the "signification of the words," or "the intention of the imposers." Is Waterland the rule which we are bound to obey? What matters it to us that Mr. Keble tells us that "the plain and direct rule is, that the Articles are to be subscribed to in the sense intended by those whose authority makes the subscription requisite," and then himself modifies his own rule by saying that "the sense of the imposers" can only mean "the sense in which they intended to allow subscription;" Is Mr. Keble to settle the rule, and to define also the sense of the imposers? The rule for understanding them has been given by authority. The king's declaration prefixed to them has determined that no man "shall put his own sense or comment to be the meaning of the Article, but shall take it in the literal and grammatical sense."

It may be very convenient to Mr. Keble to be looking for another conscience than his own to bear the weight of his ill-concealed scruples, and to take that load which he evidently endures at present with a very ill grace. He may find it suitable enough to himself to imply consent to his views, or a dispensation for them from the University, because in Convocation he has not been condemned. But can he answer honestly to his own conscience the subscribing an Article of which he says that it "has a sound at variance with the well-known and constant phraseology of the old Church writers," he believing those writers to be right. "The sound" he hears, and which is so far

not an uncertain sound even to him, as that he can point out its variation from "the phraseology" of those he thinks right; that same "sound" is identical with the "sense" of the Article. Our trumpet gives not an uncertain sound. It is one full-toned, and clear; nay, so clear to him, that he can at once perceive the want of harmony there is between it and that of others whose Catholic views he coincides with. How can he then subscribe? How can he say, as in effect he does, the sound of the Article is at variance with my understanding of it, yet I subscribe not the sound but my understanding; and this I do because no "authorised censure" has been passed upon my understanding, and until this is so I imply myself to have a dispensation? Such casuistry may be very agreeable to the criminal conscious of his guilt, who may say to himself I have broken the law, and I live in defiance of the law, but until the law convicts and transports me I am not going to convict and transport myself. That is for the law to do. Sufficient for me that having made up my mind not to obey the law, I am as yet unconvicted by it, and do not care what others think of me until I am authoritatively condemned.

The second part of Mr. Keble's "particular topic" is the case of Clerical subscription, of which he allows that "the general principles which regulate academical subscription must of course be applicable to Clerical subscription likewise," p. 25. His application of these general principles is as follows:—"If a candidate for holy orders, or a clerk nominated to any dignity or cure, were distinctly warned, by the same authority which calls on him to subscribe the Articles, that the Catholic mode of interpreting them would be considered as 'evading their sense,' and 'defeating their object; the act of signature would evidently amount to a pledge on his part against that mode of interpretation.' If, in virtue of a preceding signature, he were already exercising his ministry, his going on without protest, to do so, after such warning, would virtually come to the same thing: it would be equivalent, as I said before, to a continued signature; unless indeed he could obtain from the imposers express or implied dispensation for his own case, which would remove the sin, and, if made public, would remove the scandal also." p. 26. Can any sophistry, or string of sophistries, be more melancholy than these? "If any one is distinctly warned, by the authority calling on him to subscribe, that his interpretation of the Articles is wrong!"

But the authority may never know his interpretation ; the authority cannot see his heart, and how is his interpretation to be known ? How then can the authority know it, so as to warn the individual ? But does not the individual himself know it, and does the authority keep his conscience, so that if through necessary ignorance of the state of his mind the authority neglect to warn, the individual may sign, and maintain his views in opposition to the Articles ? This is the implied meaning of Mr. Keble. But suppose him warned, and what then ?—Is he to refuse signing ?—No ; then his signature amounts to a pledge on his part against that mode of interpretation. But how long is it so to last ?—*Pro hac vice* and no more ? To answer his purpose, and to be done with. He may yield obedience for the time, and change his views again as soon as it suits him. But changing his views, what is he then to do ? First, he is to have the same utterly improbable, almost impracticable, warning. And when warned, what then ? He may still go on under “protest.” And yet there are other escapes for him. Is he to “obtain from the imposers express or implied dispensation for his own case.” But who are the imposers ? We have been told already at p. 19 that “the Bishops for the time being” are not, for that this would be varying the standards of the Church “continually as Church offices drop and are filled up.” It must be, then, a Synod, and each individual must have “the express or implied dispensation” of a Synod in his own case. The “express dispensation” is an impracticability, so that that is out of the question, for as Mr. Keble himself acknowledges, at p. 30, to make an appeal to a Synod would “sound under present circumstances more as a way of talking than anything else.” But how then of an “implied dispensation.” Is this equally impracticable ? Any one can imply a dispensation, who desires to have it, and nothing is easier for each man in his own case to imply his own dispensation, and thus every man to do, like rebellious Israel of old, “that which is right in his own eyes.”

And after all, what is the simple meaning of a “dispensation ?” It is the easing our own conscience at the expence of another man’s. A dispensation can only be necessary when something is to be held and taught contrary to the document signed. If the person signing agree to the document, he wants no dispensation. It is only when he signs falsely that he wants a dispensation for his falsehood. Who can give him this ?—Who can

release his conscience of this sin?—Who can relieve him from the just judgment and penalty of that sin hereafter?—Will the dispenser endure hell-fire for him, as well as ease his conscience?—Unless he can bargain for this as well, his futurity is put in jeopardy indeed. But as to the scandal, how is that removed by another taking it in his stead? Is the same offence less scandalous in one than in another?—Have the dispensers in their own case, not only a power of dispensation, but an inherent dispensation in themselves for all their own failings, so that in them falsehood is no scandal? Unless this be so it is a mere shifting of the scandal from one to the other, and so far from screening or diminishing it, it increases and multiplies it, since all plain dealing men will judge both dispenser and dispensee scandalized by their mutual prevarication and falsehood.

And are these the “general principles” we are to receive? Said I not, in truth, that however regularly the subject might appear to be discussed, it would be most difficult to follow out the principles propounded in it?—General, indeed, they are, universal, œcumenical; expansive and comprehensive to the widest degree, but utterly devoid of anything bearing the true nature of principle, for they are not devised as the safe-guards and security of truth, but as the escapements of falsehood and error.

Mr. Keble then raises a fresh cloud as to who are, and who are not the imposers of clerical subscription, which is so similar to what he has before advanced, that it is quite unnecessary to dwell upon it. But as he has not yet done with his methods of escape we will follow these out as we can detect them. He supposes the case of all the Bishops, or a majority of them, declaring themselves, *ex Cathedra*, against Catholic Subscription, and then remarks, “In such case, would it not be incumbent on those who abide by the Catholic exposition, yet wished to retain their ministry, to protest in some such way, as that the very silence of our Bishops permitting them to go on, would amount to a virtual dispensation as regarded them?” Having first then raised an alarm against a Synod, which he conceives “would be taking unfair advantage of the unhappy condition of our Church, and of the real or supposed inability even of her Prelates to legislate for her, independently of those who happen to be ministers of state for the time,” and thus as he imagines quietly put the appeal to a Synod aside, he supposes the case alluded to above,

which to a person "really reverencing the Bishops as the Apostles' successors" would be tantamount to a Synod. Consequently we have here the method of submission to a Synod, or its equivalent. And what does the submission result in?—A protest against the decree, which if the Bishops were silent respecting it, would serve as a virtual dispensation. So then after a majority of the Bishops, or a Synod, have condemned Catholic subscription, the effect of their condemnation is to be, that such persons may go on subscribing under protest, unless the Bishops in some other way break the silence which they will be presumed to keep after giving their judgement, and which silence is to be construed into a virtual dispensation. This system is even to be carried on when our own Bishop has "laid on us his commands to the same effect." So that where this reverberating series of decisions, protests, commands, and implications are to end it will be most difficult to say. Ingenuity there is here, indeed, but as to principle, in the way that I understand what principle is, I am unable to discover to it.

Is it necessary, then, my Lord, that I pursue this painful subject farther, which is in fact nothing more than to trace out the melancholy wanderings of a mind predetermined to maintain a method of subscribing the Articles, which he knows is contrary to their plain meaning? What has all the quibbling about what may be, or may not be, "authoritative censures," "the imposers of the Articles," "express or implied dispensations," "signing under protest," and the like, to do with a faithful subscription to them?

Do the Bishops keep the consciences of their Clergy, or the University those of its members? Are we to be continually asking the question, does this view square with the Bishops, or the University's view of the Articles? Do not the Articles speak for themselves, and is not each man's conscience to take them as they speak, and as the plain meaning of their words is to be understood? To those, indeed, who render the promise of our Lord, "He that heareth you heareth me," by the phrase "*Ecclesia in Episcopo*," tying up the conscience of every man in that of his ecclesiastical superior, and leaving him no conscience of his own, this may be suitable enough. But since the rule of the English Church is that of the spirit of the Gospel itself, which requires every man, clerical and lay, to read and judge for himself, to search the Scriptures daily, whether these

things are so, "not handling them deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God;" it is ours "to stand fast in that liberty of the Gospel, wherewith Christ hath made us free," and which has been won for us by the Reformation, and "not to be entangled again with that yoke of bondage" in which the Church of Rome had enslaved us.

II. We come, then, secondly, my Lord, to consider what are the right Views of Subscription. It is an act which embraces three different symbols of the Church of England, the Book of Articles of Religion, the Book of Common Prayer, and the two Books of the Homilies. The first contains the sum and substance of the faith we profess, the charter of our Apostolicity, and seal of our being a branch of the Church of Christ; the second, determines the form in which our spiritual duties are to be regulated and exercised; and the third is the popular exposition of the truths, more systematically, and therefore more exactly, expressed by the first. Chief in importance and value amongst these three is the Book of Articles, because it is the express and formal declaration of the truths held by the Church; because in it, more than in either of the others, these truths are most carefully, judiciously, and precisely expressed; and because the faith we profess is consequently guarded and maintained in it, with greater jealousy than in either of the others. This must, in fact, be considered as governing the others, so that if there be any apparent diversity between them, we must revert to this as the chief authority we have for understanding and construing all our symbols, this being the most exact measure and model of the faith we profess to believe, as gathered out of the Scriptures, the sole supreme judge in this as in every other case. This, indeed, is a point always to be borne in mind, and which cannot too frequently be insisted upon, that the Scripture is the sole judge in all matters of faith, and this the Book of Articles upholds in its fullest integrity, submitting itself to it, and challenging comparison with it. We do not, then, set up the Book of Articles as above Scripture, or on an equality with it, but as under it the chief symbol of our Church expressive of the truths of Scripture, and that according to which all the others must be understood to conform, so that whenever there may appear to be a difference it is to be settled and determined by reference to this, the most precise document of them all.

I have brought out this point first, in order to shew the value of the Book of Articles, and its bearing upon the rest of our ecclesiastical system, which is wholly bounded by, and comprehended within the three symbols referred to; and also because I would now proceed to consider the nature of subscription in relation to it, the history of which will very materially assist us in determining how it is to be understood and subscribed. From what we have already seen it is too clearly manifest, that subtle attempts are making to explain away the truth of the Articles, to give them a signification exactly the reverse, the antipodes of that which they themselves speak, and confirmatory of the very errors they are expressly designed to condemn; and this is in progress because in the enquiry it is chosen altogether to overlook the one only way in which they are to be understood and subscribed, and to endeavour to substitute instead another and a most uncertain one.

The method of understanding the Articles, and according to which it is proposed that they should be subscribed, is, the finding out who are the imposers, and being governed by their decisions. And yet who are the imposers for this purpose it would be utterly impossible to say. Their framers are not, neither are the Bishops, nor is the University. These at most are but the administrators of them, and their office is that which is legally called magisterial, as distinct from judicial, so that they have nothing more to do than to require and enforce subscription. Subscription is an individual act, and must be ruled by the clear understanding of the document to be subscribed, as it commends itself to us by its own plain meaning. To use another legal phrase, "we may not travel out of the record" to comprehend it. We are not required to sign the Articles so far as they agree with ancient commentators, with the Church in any previous age, or the like; but we are to subscribe them by themselves, as they speak, as their own words express, and in no other sense than their own simple and obvious one. They are a document to be taken singly and alone, and which must be received or rejected upon its own merits alone.

Now this method of ruling subscription to them is fully substantiated by the circumstances of their history. The first Articles we had were forty-two in number, were drawn up in the Latin language, and were agreed upon in the year 1552. These were, however, shortly afterwards repealed in the time of Mary,

but revived again with some changes, though still in the Latin language, and reduced to the present number of thirty-nine, in the year 1662. Nine years afterwards they underwent another revision, and as they had been previously published only in the Latin tongue, so now in 1571 they were also set forth in our English vernacular tongue, thus clearing them of difficulties which else might have surrounded them, by reason of their having been framed in a language different from our own, and affording us a translation of them, that is of equal validity with the original Latin version. Here then was an important step to their plain and simple understanding. The revised Latin and English copies of 1571 were both subscribed by the members of convocation, and are therefore both authentic. Thus authoritatively expressed in the English tongue, they are free to the comprehension of all who understand and speak that tongue, and this is a very great point gained in the simple understanding of them.

But when the fiery ordeal of the Reformation was past, and those who liked not its spirit were gradually endeavouring to steal back again to the Egypt whence they had been delivered, and contests having been raised respecting the sense of the Articles, it became necessary to determine by what safe rule to construe even the plain English in which they were expressed, the King's declaration prefixed to them settled that question also, by affirming that no one "SHALL PUT HIS OWN SENSE OR COMMENT TO BE THE MEANING OF THE ARTICLE, BUT SHALL TAKE IT IN THE LITERAL AND GRAMMATICAL SENSE." Thus, then, the sense of the Articles, their entire sense, and nothing but their sense, is that which every minister is bound to subscribe them in; and to understand their sense he is to take them only according to that which is their literal and grammatical one.

We may cast about in vain with subtlety and duplicity to attach some other sense to them than that which they express, or, to speak in the refined phrase adopted by the Tract writers, to shew that they "look in some other direction;" we may endeavour to lay the burthen of their misrepresentation upon others, their reputed "imposers;" we may please to infer on their part an "implied dispensation" for our perversion of them; but all, or any of these, though they may cloud our consciences, and make us hypocritical subscribers of plainly expressed truths,

will not alter either the sense of those truths, or the meaning of the terms in which they are set forth to us for subscription, and will not relieve us from the just condemnation in the eyes of all plain dealing, honest-minded men, of fraud and treachery.

There still remains to be considered the most important rule of the Church of England, for understanding the doctrines contained in the Articles, and for regulating subscription to them; a rule which every man's own comprehension will enable him to apply, and which by subscription he is specially bound to exercise, and in no other sense than in agreement with it to understand, to receive, and to teach the Articles. The form of subscription requires every man to affirm, that "he acknowledgeth all and every Article therein contained, being in number nine and thirty, besides the ratification, TO BE AGREEABLE TO THE WORD OF GOD." This, however, is the very method of understanding the Articles, which those "who are imbued with Catholic principles," are determined to avoid. They will seek their sense in the doctrinal labyrinth of the so-called primitive ages; they will endeavour to learn the persons, and the minds of the imposers; they desire to shew that the Articles "look in some other direction" than their words express, and have "a sound at variance" with the old Church writers; rather than renounce these views, they may subside into lay communion with the Church, or if pressed too closely upon the subject, may "go shear over the precipice, and pledge themselves to the infallibility of Rome;" but as for testing the Articles by the Word of God, as for allowing the Word of God to have its own just and righteous authority as supreme Judge in the question, and as the only guide to truth, this is what they will turn away from and avoid, by every pretence and ingenuity. Nothing stamps the whole character of the system as being Papistical so truly, as this unceasing neglect of Scripture, and diversion from it. Let them try their own views by God's written Word, by His revealed Will, by His most plain and most easily understood declarations, and let them see what agreement there is between them. It is a hard matter in all this controversy; it is a hard matter in all the Tracts published in the course of seven or eight years, and consisting of no less than ninety numbers, to find Scripture referred to at all. In the whole of Tract No. 90, which professes to be an exposition of the Book of Articles, the chief doctrinal symbol of our

Church, I am unable to detect six references to Scripture. But as for finding its authority recognized, except in conjunction with Tradition; as for finding its truths, gracious and most merciful to man, brought forth into prominence, and made the prime subjects of their divinity, it is altogether out of the question. They cannot stand in the light of Scripture. It casts their notions so entirely into the shade, it so completely quenches the feeble ray of Catholic principles, that they cannot endure the light, neither will they come to the light, and must consequently expect their works to be numbered with those of that spiritual darkness, in the obscurity of which they best flourish and prevail. But the Articles of our Church are so full of Scriptural light, they shine with such reflection from the written Word, that those who cannot endure Scripture, cannot endure them. The people at Mount Sinai trembled when they heard the voice of God, and besought that they might not do so again, but that Moses, their mediator, might speak to them instead; and yet when he returned from the presence of God, all radiant with the beams of his purity and holiness, they who could not bear to hear the voice of the Lord, could not endure to look upon the spiritually illumined countenance of his faithful prophet, so that he was obliged to cast a veil over the dazzling brightness of that face, that shone with the glory of the Lord. Just so is it now with those who will not hear and receive the simple and gracious truths of Scripture. To them the Articles of our Church are so resplendent with Scriptural truth, are so full of the enlightening spirit of the Gospel, that Catholic principles cannot stand before them, unless their glory and their grace be veiled.

This then, my Lord, is the present state of the controversy. Mr. Ward contends that your Lordship's judgment respecting Tract 90 is "*pointedly* irrespective of its *doctrine*," and consequently, that the doctrine is uncondemned, and should be supported. Mr. Keble accounts it "a consoling, a providential circumstance, that no *authoritative* censure has yet been passed," allowing no judicial power to the censure of the Heads of Houses; and argues at large upon such principles as have been considered above, that the silence of those in authority is to be regarded as a dispensation. Surely this is not a state of things that should be allowed to exist. It is not one that can continue with credit and benefit to the Church. When we are arrived

at a condition in which we are told that the Articles may be subscribed in a sense contradictory to their own plain meaning, and in favour of the damnable errors they are pledged to deny ; when this is to be effected by the silence of those in authority, construed by the subscribers into a dispensation for their false subscription ; when the breaking of that silence is threatened with the separation from our communion of many, "whose Catholic feelings are stronger than their principles are clear and consistent," the threat being held out in order to deter those in authority from speaking ; the time is surely come when the silence of the Church can no longer be observed with fidelity to the cause of truth, or with honour even to itself.

I am, my Lord,

With much respect,

Your obedient faithful servant,

J. JORDAN.

Enstone,
June 4th, 1841.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR,

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